

# Dance Moment Therapy For Parkinson's Disease



**“I may have Parkinson's,  
but  
Parkinson's doesn't have me!”**





### What is Parkinson disease?

Parkinson's is a neurological disorder, a slowly progressive condition mainly characterized by problems with body movements. Parkinson's is globally distributed, affecting all cultures and races, with an estimated worldwide prevalence of 6.3 million people.

Parkinson's entails symptoms of many types – motor and non – motor.

- Motor Symptoms: Tremor (trembling or shaking), slowness of movement and difficulty in maintaining posture and balance.
- Non motor Symptoms: Depression, anxiety, slow bowel movements, sleep disturbances, pain.

Our brain controls all our body functions and movements by sending messages through nerves to different parts of the body. These messages are in the form of chemicals called neurotransmitters. This transmission of messages gets affected in Parkinson's.

### What is Dance/ Movement therapy?

Dance Movement Therapy, referred to simply as dance therapy or DMT, is the therapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual. Dance movement therapy combines the creative process and the study of human movement into a holistic approach that draws upon the elements inherent in dance.

### Benefits of Dance Movement Therapy, specifically focused on Parkinson disease.

Medical treatments for Parkinson's Disease (PD), including medications and deep brain stimulation, do not fully address gait and balance issues and, as such, other approaches are needed.

Dance-based balance training has been shown to be successful in improving balance in elderly individuals. Dance can result in improved cardiovascular functioning; a testament to the fact that, if done with sufficient intensity, dance is an excellent form of aerobic exercise. In fact, dance in a social setting may enhance motivation. For these reasons, dance may be an excellent form of exercise for those with PD. All forms of dance intervention have been found to provide greater improvements in the condition of the patient when compared to traditional exercises.

These are a few activities one can do to better help with Parkinson's.



## 1. Flexibility Activity



This activity makes use of flowing props like ribbons, streamers or dupattas, which provides a large range of movement and thus helps to increase flexibility of the body.



Put on some relaxing music and stretch out the hand holding the prop. Now begin moving the prop in a fluid manner. Move the prop freely as you wish making different movements and exploring the quality of the prop. Spend a good 10-15 minutes just observing the prop to get a feel of the prop's movement and the loose quality with which it moves.



After observing the prop, try imitating the movement it had been making. Imagine your body to be as loose and flexible as a ribbon and using your body, imbibe the movement you had observed.



You could even try the activity using both hands to hold the prop or using two props, one in either hand. You can improvise in this activity.

**Benefit:** This activity targets the rigidity in the body of a Parkinson's patient and helps with flexibility.

## 2. Tick Tock



First, raise the right arm up to shoulder length and hold it there, ensuring that it remains straight.

Then lift the left arm up to shoulder length as well. Then from shoulder length,



Raise the right arm, making it completely vertical and perpendicular to the ground.

Bring the left arm to the same position. This is the halfway point through the activity.



Next bring the right arm back to its position at shoulder length and then bring the left arm back as well to shoulder length.



Lastly, bring the right arm down to rest by your side & then bring the left arm down as well.

Follow these steps while verbalizing what you are doing. Once you practice enough, say 'right', 'left' and make corresponding movements in the same sequence.

After this, practice the same sequence while counting from 1 to 8.

In next step, while adding a sound to your movement; Every time you move the right arm say 'TICK' out loud and every time you move the left arm say 'TOCK' out loud. Repeat the entire process. As you get more comfortable, you can keep increasing the speed of the activity and try doing it facing different directions. Repeat this in all 4 directions until you come back to your starting point.

**Benefit:** This activity targets the rigidity in the body of a Parkinson's patient and helps with flexibility.

### 3. Mirror Activity



Grab a partner and stand face to face with each other.



One becomes 'A' and other person is 'B'. To begin 'A' is the leader and 'B' is the follower and after few minutes the roles are reversed.

The leader has to do any movement beginning from head and working his/her way down to the toes, after which he/she can do any movement they would like.



The follower has to imitate these movements. You can play any music to your liking.



After you have finished a wide range of movements, the roles are reversed. Repeat the process.

**Benefit:** This activity helps fire the mirror neurons in our brain, which are associated with learning, observing and imitating. This helps in the ability to initiate movement and helps build confidence in their movement skills. It also helps with their attention span.

## 4. Movement Control Activity



This activity requires a newspaper as a prop.

Open the newspaper page completely and lay it down on the floor. Step onto the newspaper. Play any music to your liking.



When the music is playing, move around within the area of the newspaper taking care to not overstep the boundaries of the newspaper.



When the music stops, get off the newspaper and fold it in half.

Once it has been folded, lay the newspaper back on the ground and continue doing the movements within the boundaries of the newspaper.



Fold the newspaper as many times as it is possible for you to do so.

**Benefit:** This activity helps with balance and involuntary movements. It helps to increase the control over one's movements.

## 5. Call and Response Activity

- This is again a partner activity.
- The person who creates the pattern is A and the one who copies the pattern is B. A needs create any pattern using claps. For example: A can clap using a count of 1, 2, 3 & 4.
- B has to recreate the same pattern using claps.
- Gradually increase the difficulty level by increasing the speed of the pattern or increasing the complexity of the pattern.
- A can create any patterns he/she wants and B has to repeat the same pattern.

### Benefit:

Helps improves memory, attention, and listening skills. It also helps with rhythm synchrony.



### What is PDMDS?

Although there had been considerable advances in the medical management of Parkinson's, worldwide, eminent Neuro Physician, Dr. Bhimsen Singhal felt the need for a specific approach to be adopted in India for those affected. He sensed the need for creating more public awareness about this condition and establishing a common platform for fellow sufferers to bond with each other.

Thus was born The Parkinson's Disease Movement Disorder Society, (PDMDS), which was registered in Mumbai as an all India 'Charity Society' in 2001.

From 2004 to date, the society has grown by leaps and bounds in the variety of activities it has initiated and the number of people affected by Parkinson's that it has reached. This has largely been due to the untiring & conscientious efforts of Dr. Barretto, now the CEO of PDMDS & her team. PDMDS has extended its reach to cities other than Mumbai such as Nashik, Pune, Goa and Bhavnagar.

**It believes in the dictum "I MAY HAVE PARKINSON'S, BUT PARKINSON'S WILL NOT HAVE ME"; and strives towards the goal, "TOGETHER WE MOVE BETTER."**

**We**  
don't know  
how strong  
**we** are,  
until being **Strong**  
is the only choice  
**we** have!

